ILLINOIS
DEPOSITORY

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Women's Health Programs

Illinois Department of Public Health
Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor
Eric E. Whitaker, M.D., M.P.H., Director

Why Women's Health?

1. Traditionally, medical education and research related to women's health has focused on reproductive health. Yet today's women are living nearly half of their lives outside their reproductive years.

2. While living longer than men, women are not necessarily living better and are more vulnerable to certain chronic conditions like osteoporosis, lupus, thyroid disease and depression.

3. Women have unique medical needs because of their female physiology, reproductive ability and related hormonal influences. As a result, women demonstrate different symptoms for certain conditions and often respond to treatments differently than men.

4. Until recently, many studies on the detection, treatment and prevention of disease were conducted on men only. These results were generalized to women without proof that they applied to females in the same way.

Office of Women's Health

The Office of Women's Health (OWH) was established in 1997 and is located in the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Its mission is

- to improve the health of Illinois women and girls by

initiating, facilitating and coordinating women's health awareness, education and programming throughout the state;

- to encourage healthier lifestyles among women; and

- to promote equitable public policy on health issues that affect women today and in the future.

Programs

Breast and Cervical Cancer Program
This statewide program offers free breast and cervical cancer screenings for women between the ages of 35 and 64 who have low incomes and no health insurance. Women diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer while enrolled in the program can receive treatment benefits through the Illinois Department of Public Aid.

WISEWOMAN Program
This research program, currently being piloted in designated areas of the state, is designed to help women in the Breast and Cervical Cancer Program to reduce their risk for heart disease and to promote a heart-healthy lifestyle. The program is expected to become statewide in the future.

Education Programs
The Office of Women's Health funds a variety of education programs offered through local health departments, not-for-profit community agencies and schools. The programs include multi-week curricula and/or health promotion activities that address cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, eating disorders, menopause and other health related issues. The goal is to help

women and young girls to change behaviors that can lead to healthier lifestyles. Educational sessions cover nutrition, exercise, risk assessment, treatment options and prevention strategies. Some programs focus specifically on individuals at risk, while others focus on providers and professionals who come in contact with those at risk.

Resources and Activities

- Women's Health-Line, 1-888-522-1282, one resource for all women
- Brochures, fact sheets, newsletter and other publications covering timely topics on women's health
- Speakers bureau
- Annual statewide conference on women's health
- Educational teleconferences
- Public and professional education workshops
- Women's health legislation tracking
- Women's health status analysis
- Special outreach events

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Funding Opportunities

- Women's Health Initiative Grants and Mini-Grants for special activities

  These grants fund educational curricula and promotional activities focusing on cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, menopause, eating disorders and other health issues. Local health departments and community organizations receive start-up funding for community-based projects that have the potential to be replicated statewide.

- Penny Severns Breast and Cervical Cancer Research Fund

  These grants fund institutional research projects related to investigating causes, prevention and treatment for breast and cervical cancer.

Announcements about grant opportunities, special events, publications and resources are available by calling the **Women's Health-Line at 1-888-522-1282** (TTY 1-800-547-1466), or by checking the Illinois Department of Public Health's Web site: <**www.idph.state.il.us**>.

Working Together

The Office of Women's Health works in partnership with the Governor's Office, state and local government agencies, local health departments, non-for-profit organizations, businesses, health and medical professionals, educators and advocates. As a clearinghouse for women's health services, information and education, the office serves as a resource to its partners, as well as to consumers.

Questions about women's health can be directed to

Women's Health-Line

888-522-1282

TTY

(hearing impaired use only)

800-547-0466

Illinois Department of Public Health

Office of Women's Health

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